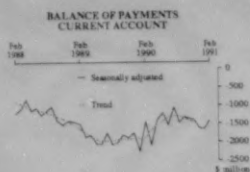


Thursday, 11 April 1991

The week in statistics ...

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J.L. CARROLL
Acting Australian Statistician



Record exports help lower current account deficit

In seasonally adjusted terms, the current account deficit for February 1991 fell \$210 million to \$1,434 million. The fall was caused mainly by a \$136 million increase in the merchandise trade surplus and an increase of \$85 million in the net unrequited transfers surplus.

The merchandise trade surplus is the sixth monthly surplus recorded for this financial year. Merchandise exports rose 5 per cent to \$4,452 million, the highest monthly seasonally adjusted exports result on record. Merchandise imports rose 2 per cent to \$4,274 million.

The net services deficit rose \$17 million, while the net income deficit fell \$6 million.

The increase in the unrequited transfers surplus was due to increased credits (up \$42 million) and reduced debits (down \$43 million).

In original terms, merchandise exports rose 3 per cent due to a \$143 million rise in non-rural exports.

For non-rural exports, significant rises were recorded in coal, coke and briquettes, up \$100 million or 24 per cent (due to higher volumes); gold, up \$90 million or 33 per cent (due to volume increases); other non-rural, up \$84 million or 59 per cent; and transport equipment, up \$63 million or 36 per cent (largely reflecting the export of two civil aircraft by Qantas worth \$123 million compared with one valued at \$64 million the previous month). The largest fall was recorded in metal ores and minerals, down \$113 million or 16 per cent (due mainly to lower volumes for iron ore and alumina).

Rural exports fell \$2 million. Falls in sugar and 'other' rural exports were almost offset by increases in wool and cereals.

Merchandise imports fell \$325 million or 8 per cent in original terms, with falls recorded for most commodity groups. The largest fall was in machinery, down \$174 million or 14 per cent.

**BALANCE OF PAYMENTS
CURRENT ACCOUNT**
\$ million

	January 1991		February 1991	
	Original	Seasonally adjusted	Original	Seasonally adjusted
Balance on merchandise trade	- 176	42	290	178
Net services	- 218	- 234	- 72	- 251
Net income	- 1,687	- 1,624	- 1,685	- 1,618
Net unrequited transfers	156	172	237	257
Balance on current account	- 1,925	- 1,644	- 1,230	- 1,434

The accumulated deficit on merchandise trade for the first eight months of 1990-91, in original terms, is just \$13 million, compared with a deficit of \$3,794 million in the same period of 1989-90.

The accumulated current account deficit stands at \$12,203 million, compared with \$15,565 million in the eight months to February 1990.

For further information, order the publication *Balance of Payments, Australia* (5301.0), or contact Zia Abbasi on (06) 252 6689.

Job vacancies still falling

The seasonally adjusted estimated number of job vacancies fell 24.2 per cent from 35,400 in November 1990 to 26,900 in February 1991. The February figure is a decrease of 52.3 per cent on February 1990 and it is the lowest estimate since the series was introduced in November 1983, when there were 30,100 vacancies.

The job vacancy rate for February 1991 fell to 0.52 per cent from 0.60 per cent in November 1990.

In original terms, the estimated 16,200 vacancies in the private sector were 16.6 per cent less than in November 1990. Vacancies in the public sector decreased 12.9 per cent to 12,800.



JOB VACANCIES

	At 16 November 1990	At 15 February 1991	Percentage change
Original —			
Private sector	19,400	16,200	-16.6
Public sector	14,700	12,800	-12.9
All sectors	34,100	29,000	-15.0
Seasonally adjusted —			
All sectors	35,400	26,900	-24.2

Each State and Territory, except Western Australia and Tasmania, recorded a decrease in the number of job vacancies compared with November 1990. New South Wales had the largest decrease (down 4,000 or 25.3%).

The percentage of employees working overtime fell 2.4 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms between November and February, and the estimate of average weekly overtime hours per employee working overtime decreased by 1.1 per cent to 7.14 hours.

For further information, order the publication *Job Vacancies and Overtime, Australia* (6354.0), or contact Mick Atkinson on (06) 252 5946.

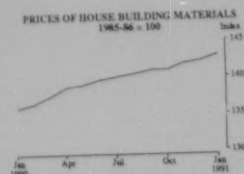
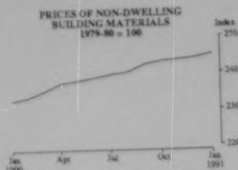
Building materials prices increase

Prices for house building materials increased by 0.6 per cent, while materials used in other than house building showed an increase of 0.5 per cent in January 1991.

The main price increases in January for house building materials were for structural timber, ready mixed concrete and clay bricks.

For materials used in buildings other than houses, the main price increases were for ready mixed concrete, air conditioning equipment, reinforcing steel, steel windows and doors, and sand, aggregate and filling.

Over the year to January 1991 prices for house building materials increased by 5.3 per cent and prices for materials used in other buildings increased by 5.4 per cent. These annual increases continued the downward trend evident over recent periods, despite the fact that the January increases were a little higher than those in recent months in both categories.



PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, JANUARY 1991
Percentage change

City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	0.4	6.1	0.3	6.0
Melbourne	0.6	3.7	0.7	5.1
Brisbane	1.5	6.1	0.7	4.0
Adelaide	0.3	5.4	0.2	5.6
Perth	0.3	6.4	0.2	5.5
Hobart	—	4.4	0.1	4.1
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.6	5.3	0.5	5.4
Darwin	— Not available —	—	-0.1	4.8
Canberra	0.2	4.9	0.1	6.4

For further information, order the publications *Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0)* and *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building (6407.0)*, or contact Kim Tobin on (06) 252 6198.

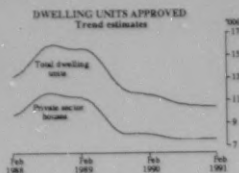
Housing approvals fall again

Total dwelling unit approvals fell by 2.9 per cent, in seasonally adjusted terms, between January and February 1991 with private sector house approvals falling by 3.3 per cent.

The decline in February followed a sharp rise in both total and private sector house approvals in January. That rise was, however, against the trend.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics trend series for total dwelling units approved has continually declined since March 1989. The trend series for private sector house approvals remains flat, following earlier indications of a slight upward movement.

Continued ...



The value of total building approved (residential and non-residential) increased by 32.6 per cent to \$2,211.9 million in February 1991 (seasonally adjusted) but was 3.4 per cent lower than the February 1990 figure of \$2,289.2 million.

DWELLING UNITS APPROVED, FEBRUARY 1991

	Private sector houses		Total dwelling units	
	No.	Percentage change on previous month	No.	Percentage change on previous month
Original	6,932	2.5	9,860	7.3
Seasonally adjusted	7,532	-3.3	10,474	-2.9
Trend estimate	7,597	-0.2	10,436	-0.3

The trend series for the value of total building approved is showing a slight upward movement. This upward movement largely reflects a substantial increase in the original current price value of non-residential building approved in February. The trend series for the value of non-residential building approved, is only available to November 1990 because of the high volatility of the series, and shows a continuation of the decline evident since the beginning of 1990.

For further information, order the publication *Building Approvals, Australia* (8731.0), or contact Paul Seville on (06) 252 6067.

Lower oil prices continue to bring down manufacturing input costs

The price index of materials used in manufacturing industries fell by 2.5 per cent in January 1991.

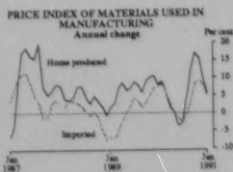
The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for imported and domestic crude petroleum, reflecting the continuing decrease in world oil prices.

Prices for home produced materials recorded a decrease of 2.9 per cent in January while the decrease for imported materials was 1.7 per cent.

Over the year to January, prices of manufacturing materials increased by 5.4 per cent. The annual increase, like the January decreases, were caused largely by movements in world oil prices. There were also decreased prices for home produced metal ores and concentrates in January, offset by higher prices for live animals.

PRICE INDEXES OF MATERIALS USED IN MANUFACTURING, JANUARY 1991
Percentage change

Source of material	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Imported	-1.7	4.7
Home produced	-2.9	5.7
All manufacturing	-2.5	5.4



Employee earnings profile released

Preliminary results from the May 1990 Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours have just been released. They provide a snapshot of the distribution and composition of employee earnings and hours classified by sex, adult/junior, sector, industry and major occupation groups.

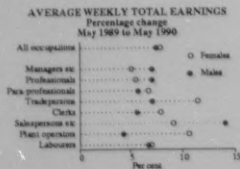
Significant features from the 22-page publication include:

For all employees

- ☐ males account for 77 per cent of managerial employees
- ☐ median earnings for males were \$520.80 per week
- ☐ median earnings for females were \$360.90 per week
- ☐ a high proportion (76.5%) of part-time employees are females.

For full-time adult non-managerial employees

- ☐ median weekly earnings were \$533.30 for males and \$444.90 for females
- ☐ males received on average \$62.20 in overtime earnings compared with \$12.50 for females
- ☐ males received \$12.80 in overaward pay, while females received \$6.90
- ☐ private sector employees received \$15.80 in overaward pay compared with \$1.70 in the public sector.



The graph at left shows the change in average weekly total earnings of adult employees by major occupation group in the period May 1989 to May 1990. The largest increases were for adult male salespersons and personal service workers (14.0%). For adult female employees the largest increases were for tradespersons (11.4%), plant and machine operators, and drivers (10.6%) and salespersons and personal service workers (9.2%).

AVERAGE WEEKLY TOTAL EARNINGS, MAY 1990
Full-time adult employees
Dollars

Occupation	Males	Females	Persons
Managers and administrators	812	601	771
Professionals	758	614	699
Para-professionals	676	589	648
Tradespersons	569	432	561
Clerks	550	453	486
Salespersons and personal service workers	558	426	497
Plant and machine operators, and drivers	583	395	556
Labourers and related workers	493	391	466
All occupations	618	484	573

Australian Economic Indicators

Australian Economic Indicators is a new monthly publication, bringing together in one volume a full statistical picture of the Australian economy. It was developed by economic analysts for economic analysts.

Comprehensive picture of the economy

The publication begins with a monthly review — a succinct textual description and analysis of the latest economic indicators, accompanied by appropriate charts and a statistical summary similar to, but more comprehensive than, the *Statistics Weekly* summary.

Key indicators are drawn from national, international and public sector accounts, as well as financial market and prices information, consumption and production data and labour force and demography figures. Both ABS and non-ABS economic time series, as well as derived data frequently used in economic analysis, are included.

Australian Economic Indicators then goes on to deal in greater depth and detail with each of the major elements of the Australian economy. The state of the economy, as indicated by figures in the March issue, includes:

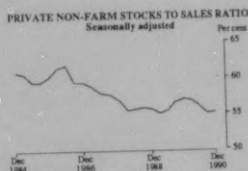
- ☐ a conflicting picture of overall activity in the December quarter 1990, with seasonally adjusted constant price measures increasing for GDP(I) and GDP(E) and decreasing for GDP(P);
- ☐ a decline of 0.6 per cent in the trend estimate of the average of the three measures of GDP, GDP(A), which is still well below the long term average increase of around 0.7 per cent per quarter; and
- ☐ a fall of 92,200 in full-time employment in February 1991 in seasonally adjusted terms, together with an increase of 61,600 in part-time employment and 26,100 in unemployment.

Behind the data

Australian Economic Indicators also 'looks behind' the data to try to give an insight into their movements.

For example, a surprisingly high rise occurred in Average Weekly Earnings between August and November 1990. Further analysis included in the March issue indicates that, in times of decreasing employment, lower paid labour tends to be shed first.

Also analysis of past data shows that the trend unemployment rate in past downturns has continued to rise until growth in trend GDP(A) in constant prices has risen above its long term average of around 0.7 per cent per quarter.



Statistics Weekly

Synopsis of articles, March 1991

7 March 1991

Retail trade falls in real terms

Seasonally adjusted retail turnover in the December 1990 quarter fell by 1.6 per cent in real terms over September 1990 quarter, the largest fall since June quarter 1983. Turnover was also down 1.6 per cent on the December 1989 quarter.

Exchange rate boosts foreign debt

Net foreign liabilities at 31 December 1990 totalled \$172,363 million. This was an increase of \$674 million, or 0.4 per cent, on the position at the end of the September quarter.

Vehicle registrations trend down

Vehicle registrations for January 1991 (36,344 vehicles) were 17.8 per cent below those for January 1990. On a seasonally adjusted basis there was a small increase of 0.8 per cent from 43,629 in December 1990 to 43,963 in January 1991. Seasonally adjusted car and station wagon registrations rose by 0.8 per cent and other vehicles by 0.7 per cent between December and January. The trend estimate, however, declined for the ninth month in succession, with a fall of 3.1 per cent in January 1991.

Home building approvals — has the trough finally bottomed out?

There was a 10.1 per cent increase in seasonally adjusted dwelling approvals between December 1990 and January 1991 resulting in a further slowing of the recent downward trend.

Capital investment down and plans for future trimmed

Preliminary estimates of new capital expenditure for the December quarter 1990 revealed capital expenditure well short of expectations of businesses. Businesses also revised down their estimate of future capital expenditure for the six months to June 1991.

Mining boosts December quarter profits

Profits before income tax for companies with more than 30 employees are estimated to be \$4,640 million for the December quarter 1990. In seasonally adjusted terms this is an increase of 16 per cent over the September quarter 1990, the first increase since the June quarter 1989.

Manufacturing input costs still falling due to lower oil prices

The price indexes of materials used in manufacturing industries fell by 3.7 per cent in December 1990.

The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for imported and domestic crude petroleum, but world oil prices had earlier been largely responsible for the 9 per cent increase in the index in the year to December.

Manufacturing in brief

Manufacturing production movements in tabular form, providing a general overview of the sector in January 1991.

The first national ABS profile of Australia's Aboriginal people

At the 1986 Census, almost 228,000 Australians, or 1.5 per cent of the population, identified themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

New major resource for secondary Australian Studies

The ABS in Victoria has developed a comprehensive book of source data and commentary for senior secondary students of Australian Studies. Written with Victorian Year 11 students in mind, *Australia - Working It Out!* is proving to have much wider appeal throughout Australia. It provides discussion on many areas of the curriculum and introduces students to data usage techniques relevant to their research tasks in Australian Studies and other subjects.

14 March 1991

Turnaround in merchandise trade lowers current account deficit

In seasonally adjusted terms, the current account deficit for January 1991 fell \$175 million to \$1,582 million.

Stock levels and manufacturers' sales stabilise after recent falls

Preliminary results from the quarterly Survey of Stocks and Manufacturers' Sales show that the value of stocks held at 31 December 1990 was only 0.3 per cent lower in seasonally adjusted constant price terms than it was at the end of September. This follows falls of 1.6 and 2.5 per cent during the three months to June and September respectively. However mining, with an increase of 7.1 per cent, was the only major industry group to register a rise.

Synopsis of articles, March 1991 – continued

14 March 1991 – continued

Increased growth in average weekly earnings

Preliminary estimates for November 1990 show that average weekly ordinary time earnings for full-time adults increased by 2.5 per cent over August 1990.

Help us design a small business data base

The Australian Bureau of Statistics is carrying out a feasibility study into the establishment of a data base specific to the small business sector.

Oil and \$A boost import prices

Import prices rose by 6.8 per cent in the December quarter of 1990, the largest quarterly increase since the September quarter of 1986.

21 March 1991

Sharp fall in full-time employment

The February 1991 survey of the labour force recorded the largest decline in full-time employment since the monthly survey commenced in February 1978.

Retail trade improves slightly

Seasonally adjusted retail turnover increased by 2.5 per cent in January 1991 over the relatively low December 1990 figure.

Sheep slaughterings, mutton production at 18-year high

In January 1991, sheep slaughterings for human consumption were the highest since March 1973 and rose by 14.3 per cent for the month.

Road freight movement down against trend

Total interstate road freight moved by major operators during the December quarter 1990 was 2.5 per cent lower than the September quarter 1990.

Decline in housing starts eases

Total dwelling units commenced fell slightly in the December quarter 1990 on a seasonally adjusted basis.

28 March 1991

The latest National Accounts figures

Income and expenditure-based GDP

Constant price gross domestic product (GDP) rose 0.6 per cent in December quarter 1990.

Production-based GDP

Constant price GDP(P) fell by 1.0 per cent in December quarter 1990, its third successive quarterly decline.

Industrial production slump continues

The constant price value of industrial production continued to slide in the December quarter 1990 in seasonally adjusted terms, with a fall of 1.0 per cent.

Prices of manufactures and exports fall again in January

The price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry fell by 0.8 per cent in January 1991 following a 0.6 per cent decrease in December 1990, while export prices decreased by 1.0 per cent in January following a 2.0 per cent decrease in December.

Tourist accommodation: increase in supply outstrips demand

There were 7.2 per cent more rooms available in Australian hotels, motels and guest houses in the September quarter 1990 than in the same quarter of 1989. However, because room nights sold increased by only 4.2 per cent, over the same period, the room occupancy rate fell from 54.1 to 52.8 per cent.

A guide to major ABS classifications

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has produced a guide to its major statistical classifications to assist users of our products.

Housing finance see-saw is up — but trend still down

Seasonally adjusted housing finance commitments for January 1991 were \$1,591.7 million, an increase of \$57.9 million (3.8%) over December 1990 and a decrease of \$38.9 million (2.4%) on January 1990.

Vehicle registrations trend still down

The trend estimate for new motor vehicle registrations fell for the tenth consecutive month with a 2.0 per cent drop from January to February 1991.

Manufacturing in brief ...

Manufacturing production movements in tabular form, providing a general overview of the sector in February 1991.

Just over a million potential workers

There are more than one million Australians who wanted to work but are not officially in the labour force.

Continued from page i

International Comparisons

International comparisons provide a measure of Australia's economic performance relative to other OECD countries. For example:

- ❑ consumer prices between December 1989 and December 1990 rose 6.9 per cent in Australia, compared with 6.2 per cent in the US and 9.9 per cent in the UK, and while US and UK figures are higher than a year ago, Australian figures are lower;
- ❑ seasonally adjusted standardised unemployment rates in December 1990 were 8.0 per cent in Australia, 6.0 per cent in the US and 7.0 per cent in the UK, with recent figures rising in each of the three countries;
- ❑ short term interest rates in January 1991 were 11.85 per cent in Australia, 7.17 per cent in the US, and 13.97 per cent in the UK, with the gap between the Australian interest rates and those of the US closing. (The forthcoming April issue will show that the gap between Australian and Japanese interest rates is also closing.)

Technical notes and feature articles

These will be a regular part of *Australian Economic Indicators*.

The March issue, for example, explains why an analyst might adjust Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for changes in terms of trade, how this is done, and what has been happening to the adjusted figure in recent years.

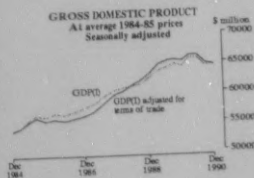
The article shows that during the past 7 quarters, there has been a downward trend in Australia's terms of trade, with the result that they are almost 12 per cent lower than at the March 1989 peak. This has resulted in a fall in constant price GDP adjusted for the terms of trade since the March quarter 1989, despite the rise over this period in GDP at constant prices.

The April issue will include a feature article evaluating commonly used procedures to track trends and pick turning points in the economy. It indicates some of the pitfalls associated with a number of these techniques, and points clearly to the need for care in their use.

To order

To order your copy of *Australian Economic Indicators*, phone the ABS subscription service toll-free on (008) 020608 or (008) 020546 or contact Information Services at any of our State offices.

If you would like further information concerning *Australian Economic Indicators* (1350.0), telephone Michael Anderson on (06) 252 6025.



Customised information from ABS information consultants ...

The introduction of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Information Service revolutionised the way in which ABS clients accessed information, and provided a far more effective relationship between the ABS and its clients.

The success of the Information Service can be measured in the substantial growth in business which it has experienced over the years and the change it has undergone in response to user demand.

The ABS Information Consultancy Service is the latest development. This service is provided for clients who have more complex or more specialised information needs. ABS consultants can assemble information for you from current or historical sources or can conduct more substantial research and analyses that might also include detailed unpublished data. Examples include:

- ☐ profiles of particular regions (you specify the area in which you are interested)
- ☐ data about specific commodities (e.g. production, foreign trade, household expenditure)
- ☐ information about particular sub-sets of the population (e.g. geographic distribution, income).

By doing so, ABS experts provide a more effective relationship between the ABS and its clients, and can save you time and money.

For more information contact your local ABS office (see page 10).

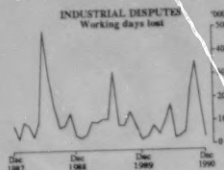
... plus top quality advice for your statistical projects

The Statistical Consultancy service is one of the more specialised services available from the ABS. This service offers clients access to the experience and expertise of professional statisticians in the ABS. It provides high quality and independent advice and assistance.

Our consultants are able to help in any or all of the components of a statistical survey, including survey design, sample selection, questionnaire design or evaluation and data analysis. The Statistical Consultancy also provides an advisory service on tender specifications for surveys and other statistical projects.

Our consultants are happy to discuss with you any other project for which you think we may be of assistance. We can also provide you with an estimate of what our services would cost before starting work on your project.

For more information on the Statistical Consultancy service, contact in NSW, Bernard Wong on (02) 268 4660; Vic., Darren Pennay (03) 615 7365; Qld, Bruce Siemon (07) 222 6308; WA, Sam Di Scerni (09) 323 5252; SA, Roger Mablesen (08) 237 7315; Tas., Cassy Short (002) 20 5828; NT, Barry Messer (089) 81 5222; ACT, Jenny Poulton (06) 252 6201.



Industrial disputes down sharply

In December 1990, 54 industrial disputes were reported, resulting in the loss of 31,500 working days. This is a substantial decrease from November 1990 when 126 disputes cost 178,800 working days.

In the mining (other than coal mining) industry, the 300 working days lost was the lowest figure since the same number was reported in April 1972. The transport and storage; communication industry recorded 400 working days lost, the lowest since the introduction of the monthly publication in October 1969.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS
WORKING DAYS LOST
('000)

	December 1989	November 1990	December 1990	Twelve months ended December	
				1989	1990
Mining	3.9	22.6	7.4	199.0	230.0
Manufacturing	6.3	117.1	5.1	387.8	667.3
Construction	4.5	3.7	0.1	117.0	62.0
Transport and storage; communication	4.9	1.1	0.4	70.7	129.8
Other industries	1.2	34.3	18.4	427.9	277.5
All industries	20.8	178.8	31.5	1,202.4	1,366.9

In the twelve months ended December 1990 a total of 1,177 disputes were reported and 1,366,900 working days were lost. This compares with 1,402 disputes in progress and 1,202,400 working days lost in the year ended December 1989.

There was a significant increase in industrial dispute in the metal products, machinery and equipment manufacturing industry, where working days lost increased from 201,100 in 1989 to 535,400 in 1990.

For further information, order the publication *Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6321.0), or contact Brenda McMorrow on (06) 252 6561.

Migrants in the labour force

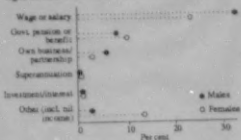
The number of migrants who arrived in Australia after 1970, aged 18 years or over on arrival and who had obtained permanent residency status was estimated to be 1,158,900 at September 1990.

Of this total, 72 per cent were classified as being in the labour force, with participation rates of 86.0 per cent for males and 57.5 per cent for females. For the labour force as a whole the corresponding participation rates were 76.1 per cent and 52.7 per cent.

Labour force participation rates were highest for unsponsored principal applicants (83.0%) and for those from New Zealand (82.5%). For sponsored principal applicants the labour force participation rate was 68.5 per cent.

Continued ...

MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME OF MIGRANTS
Aged 18 and over who arrived in Australia after 1970



The unemployment rate for the migrants identified in paragraph one was 9.7 per cent at September 1990. (For the total labour force, the rate was 7.3%) Migrants born in Asia had the highest unemployment rate at 12.9 per cent, while those migrants whose birthplace was America or Oceania had unemployment rates of 7.2 and 7.3 per cent respectively. Migrants from Europe and Africa had unemployment rates of 8.7 per cent.

The graph at left shows the main source of income for males and females. Overall, 56 per cent of migrants received a wage or salary as their main source of income at September 1990, 17 per cent of migrants nominated a government pension or benefit as their main source of income, 9 per cent relied on their own business or partnership, and 2 per cent received investment or interest. Only 0.3 per cent of the migrants surveyed received superannuation, while 16 per cent reported 'other' sources (including nil income).

For further information, order the publication *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants, Australia (6250.0)*, or contact Mirella Wilson on (06) 252 6661.

In brief ...

☐ Population

The estimated resident population of Australia at 30 September 1990 is 17,148,800, an increase of 62,600 in the September quarter and 257,000 since September 1989. Of this increase, slightly more than half (53%) was due to natural increase.

Source: *Australian Demographic Statistics, September Quarter 1990 (3101.0)*.

☐ Lease finance

The value of goods under new lease finance commitments (excluding leveraged leases) totalled \$262.3 million in January 1991, a decrease of \$434.2 million (62.3%) over December 1990.

There was a general decrease across all types of goods leased in January 1991 compared with December 1990; the major decreases were 'automatic data processing equipment and office machines', down \$277.1 million (93.5%), and motor vehicles, down \$94.9 million (36.9%).

Source: *Lease Finance, Australia, January 1991 (5644.0)*.

Supplement

A removable supplement is included in this issue between pages 6 and 7. This contains information on the *Australian Economic Indicators* publication and a synopsis of *Statistics Weekly* articles released in March 1991.

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- ☐ through its bookshops
- ☐ by mail order (including subscription)
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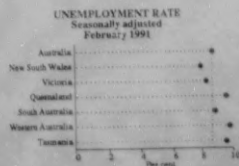
Calendar of key releases

Expected releases over the fortnight to 23 April 1991

- 11** The Labour Force, Australia, March 1991, Preliminary (6202.0; \$10.00)
- 12** Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia, November 1990 (6302.0; \$10.00)
- 16** Retail Trade, Australia, February 1991 (8501.0; \$10.00)
- 22** Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, February 1991 (5609.0; \$10.00)
- Export Price Index, Australia, February 1991 (6405.0; \$7.50)
- 23** Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, February 1991 (6407.0; \$10.00)

The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to
9 April 1991



	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Sept. qtr 90) ⁺	-0.9	-10.9	5.4	11.2	-17.9	37.2	n.a.	n.a.	-3.4
Retail turnover (Jan. 91) (trend estimate)	3.4	-2.8	4.2	9.1	2.4	6.1	n.a.	9.3	2.6
New motor vehicle registrations (Feb. 91) ⁺	-14.4	-25.6	-15.2	-20.6	-18.9	-24.3	-34.8	11.4	-18.3
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Feb. 91)	-7.8	-21.1	1.8	-7.4	-17.7	-9.0	-30.5	-54.1	-11.1
Value of total building work done (Sept. qtr 90)	-7.2	-7.7	-14.0	-6.3	-25.8	-18.8	-1.0	-9.0	-10.6
Employed persons (February 91) ⁺	0.6	-2.8	-1.6	0.9	-1.1	-0.2	-6.4	2.2	-0.8
Capital city consumer price index (Dec. qtr 90)	6.4	7.4	6.2	7.8	7.4	6.1	7.1	6.8	6.9
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (August 90)	8.4	7.0	6.9	7.3	7.9	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.4
Population (Sept. 90)	1.1	1.4	2.4	1.1	2.3	1.1	0.9	2.5	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc (Sept. qtr 90)	3.2	0.1	6.5	1.8	0.8	23.5	7.4	20.9	4.2

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. + Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.

Key national indicators - consolidated to 9 April 1991

		Period	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on		
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year	
National production							
Gross domestic product	— current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 90	101,082	95,247	1.3	3.4
	— 1984-85 prices			70,031	64,725	0.6	0.6
Industrial activity							
New capital expenditure	— current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 90	7,305	6,612	3.2	-10.6
	— 1984-85 prices			5,542	5,021	3.6	-10.3
Expected new capital expenditure		"	Three months to Dec. 90	8,311	n.a.	n.a.	-5.7
Retail turnover	— current prices	"	January 91	6,980	7,242	2.5	3.7
	— 1984-85 prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	16,480	14,620	-1.6	-1.6
New motor vehicle registrations		no.	February 91	39,405	43,550	-0.9	-18.3
Dwelling unit approvals		"	February 91	9,860	10,474	-2.9	-11.2
Value of all building approvals		\$m		1,915	2,212	32.6	-3.4
Value of total building work done		"	Sept. qtr 90	7,214	6,951	-3.7	-10.6
	— current prices	"		4,556	4,390	-4.2	-14.4
	— 1984-85 prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	36,754	35,064	1.0	-1.0
Manufacturers' sales	— current prices	"		25,318	24,134	0.0	-3.0
	— 1984-85 prices	"					
Expected manufacturers' sales		"	Six months to June 91	70,139	n.a.	n.a.	-1.8
Labour							
Employed persons (a)		'000	February 91	7,739.3	7,792.5	-0.4	-0.8
Unemployment rate † (a)		%	"	9.5	8.7	0.4	2.3
Participation rate † (a)		"	"	63.8	63.6	-0.1	-0.1
Job vacancies		'000	November 90	34.1	35.4	-27.8	-45.6
Average weekly overtime per employee		hours	"	1.3	1.3	-1.9	-16.2
Prices, profits and wages							
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 90	214.5	n.a.	2.7	6.9
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0		January 91	125.6	n.a.	-2.5	5.4
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1988-89 = 100.0		January 91	111.9	n.a.	-0.8	5.1
Company profits before income tax		\$m	Dec. qtr 90	4,640	3,911	15.9	4.8
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)		\$	November 90	554.40	n.a.	2.5	7.3
Interest rates (b) (monthly average)							
90-day bank bills †	% per annum		February 91	11.65	n.a.	-0.20	-4.60
10-year Treasury bonds †			"	11.55	n.a.	0.05	-1.75
Balance of payments							
Exports of merchandise		\$m	February 91	4,271	4,452	4.8	6.6
Imports of merchandise		"	"	3,981	4,274	1.6	4.6
Balance on merchandise trade (c)		"	"	290	178	323.8	97.8
Balance of goods and services (c)		"	"	218	-73	62.0	62.9
Balance on current account (c)		"	"	-1,230	-1,434	12.8	0.3
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 90	n.a.	97.9	-5.8	-9.3
Foreign investment							
Net foreign debt		\$m	30 Dec. 90	130,771	n.a.	1.9	6.7
Net foreign liabilities		"	"	172,363	n.a.	0.4	5.6
Exchange rates (monthly average)							
US\$	per \$A		February 91	0.7843	n.a.	0.7	3.2
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0		"	57.3	n.a.	-0.5	-2.2
Other indicators							
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million		Sept. 90	17.1	n.a.	0.4	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals	'000		October 90	191	188	-1.4	12.9

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage change, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit, no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures expected to be released Thursday 11 April 1991.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available. Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 10). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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